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September 20, 2023

Clerk of Appellate Courts  
Post Office Box 249  
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Re: Comments on Petition to Create Rules for Collaborative Law;  
Misc. Cause No. 89-R-99044

To the Supreme Court of Mississippi:

Collaborative Law is an Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism proposed to apply only to Domestic Relations matters at this time. It is a completely voluntary process and is a matter of contract among the parties and their attorneys. The proposed rules are similar to the Annexed Rules of Mediation in that the process is meant to be confidential so as to promote confidence and candor in the process.

Collaborative Law is good for the parties to a divorce and their children. Divorce and Custody matters are special in nature. They are matters of the heart and soul that deal with our most intimate relationships: marriage and parenthood. Of all legal matters before our Courts, these matters should be handled with great care to preserve relationships to the greatest extent possible. Amicable, respectful proceedings promote good co-parenting. Collaborative Law proceedings are designed to foster transparency and result in forthcoming disclosures so that the parties, with the assistance of their legal counsel and jointly retained experts (financial, appraisal, mental health counselors, physicians, etc.), can fashion an agreement that will work for the parties for the long term.

Collaborative Law is good for attorneys. This process is much less adversarial than litigated divorce and leads to greater satisfaction in the practice of law for those attorneys who opt to practice collaboratively.

Collaborative Law is good for the judiciary. This process can open the Courts' dockets for matters where agreement is not possible. The Court maintains ultimate authority to grant the divorce and to oversee any custody and child support agreements, just as the Court does in any

Irreconcilable Differences divorce. The Collaborative process promotes agreement and can prevent discovery and contempt motions from clogging dockets.

I request your support and implementation of this option for family law dispute resolution.

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